

FOLLOWING THE TRACES OF MODERN/COLONIAL EPISTEMS IN THE CURRICULAR DOCUMENT OF THE STATE OF PARÁ

SEGUINDO OS TRAÇOS DA EPISTEME MODERNO/COLONIAL NO DOCUMENTO CURRICULAR DO ESTADO DO PARÁ

SIGUIENDO LAS HUELLAS DE EPISTEMAS MODERNOS/COLONIALES EM EL DOCUMENTO CURRICULAR DEL ESTADO DE PARÁ

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to analyze the curricular policy of the state of Pará, considering the modern/colonial epistemic. The theoretical contribution is that of the decolonial overturn with Mignolo (2003; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2014), Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2005b; 2007), Palermo (2014), and of the curricular studies with Silva (1999), Macedo (2014; 2015), and Lopes (2004; 2008; 2019). The field of investigation is the Document of the State of Pará, and the art of doing is multifocal ethnography, an emerging producer for the analysis of documents (MARCUS, 2001). The results indicate that two features of the modern/colonial epistemic stand out, the disciplinary structure and the cultural homogenization, producing an inconsistent curriculum document. I indicate as a reason for such curricular inconsistency the fact that the state agents have conducted the methodology of elaboration of the Curricular Document of the State of Pará through excessive epistemic obedience, as well as for having excluded organized civil society and traditional communities from the process. I conclude by arguing that epistemic disobedience is capable of producing a different knowledge policy, guided by the politics of place, transdisciplinarity and interculturality.

KEYWORDS: Modern/colonial episteme. DCEPará. Disciplinary structure. Cultural homogenization. Epistemic disobedience.

RESUMO: Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a política curricular do estado do Pará, considerando a episteme moderno/colonial. O aporte teórico é o do giro decolonial com Mignolo (2003; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2014), Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2005b; 2007), Palermo (2014), e dos estudos curriculares com Silva (1999), Macedo (2014; 2015) e Lopes (2004; 2008; 2019). O campo de investigação é o Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará, e a arte do fazer é a etnografia multilocal, um procedimento emergente para a análise de documentos (MARCUS, 2001). Os resultados indicam que dois traços da episteme moderno/colonial se destacam, a estrutura disciplinar e a homogeneização cultural, produzindo um documento curricular inconsistente. Indico como razão de tal inconsistência curricular o fato de os agentes estatais terem conduzido a metodologia de elaboração do Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará por meio de excessiva obediência epistêmica, bem como por terem excluído a sociedade civil organizada e as comunidades tradicionais do processo. Concluo argumentando que a

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desobediência epistêmica é capaz de produzir uma política do conhecimento outra, orientada pela política do lugar, pela transdisciplinaridade e pela interculturalidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Episteme moderno/colonial. DCEPará. Estrutura disciplinar. Homogeneização cultural. Desobediência epistêmica.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la política curricular del estado de Pará, considerando la episteme moderno/colonial. El aporte teórico es el del giro decolonial con Mignolo (2003; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2014), Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2005b; 2007), Palermo (2014), y de estudios curriculares con Silva (1999), Macedo (2014; 2015) y Lopes (2004; 2008; 2019). El campo de investigación es el Documento Curricular del Estado de Pará, y el arte de hacer es la etnografía multilocal un procedimiento emergente para el análisis de documentos (MARCUS, 2001). Los resultados indican que se destacan dos rasgos de la episteme moderno/colonial, la estructura disciplinaria y la homogeneización cultural, produciendo un documento curricular inconsistente. Indico como razón de tal inconsistencia curricular el hecho de que los agentes estatales hayan conducido la metodología de elaboración del Documento Curricular del Estado de Pará a través de una excesiva obediencia epistémica, así como por haber excluido del proceso a la sociedad civil organizada y las comunidades tradicionales. Concluyo argumentando que la desobediencia epistémica es capaz de producir una política de conocimiento diferente, guiada por la política del lugar, la transdisciplinariedad y la interculturalidad.*

PALAVRAS CLAVE: *Episteme moderno/colonial. DCEPará. Estructura disciplinaria. Homogeneización cultural. Desobediencia epistémica.*

Introduction

This article aims to follow two traits of the *modern/colonial episteme* present in the curricular policy of the state of Pará and, in this movement, I count on the contributions of the *giro decolonial* (decolonial turn), dialoguing with Mignolo (2003; 2005; 2007; 2008; 2014), Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2005b; 2007), Palermo (2014), as well as with Silva (1999), Macedo (2014; 2018) and Lopes (2004; 2008; 2019) in the field of curricular studies.

I think it is worth briefly clarifying about the *decolonial turn*. It is a political, theoretical and ethical movement that has been constituted by a *community of arguments* with intellectuals from Latin America, such as Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Arturo Escobar, Santiago Castro-Gómez, Zulma Palermo, María Lugones, Catherine Walsh, and many others. This movement began in the late 1990s, having consolidated itself as a critical alternative for thinking about solutions to the region's problems. This community of argument is based on the assumption that modernity is a product of colonialism

and the four colonial strategies², intending to make visible its dark side – the social, epistemological and ontological problems –, and to interrupt colonial rule in Latin America. With this intention, the *decolonial turn* criticizes liberal, critical and post-critical theories, considering that they ignore the effects of colonialism on the *politics of place* and the politics of knowledge. Considering this, its challenge has been to produce non-Eurocentric analytical tools capable of helping in the constitution of an episteme and an art of living another in this region.

As for the method, I have presented the multilocal ethnography more slowly elsewhere³, and now I will be brief. Multilocal ethnography is an emerging, contested, but productive *art of doing* that emerged in the 1980s as a response to contemporary epistemic and contextual crises (MARCUS, 2001; MARCUS; FISHER, 2000), expressed in the dilution of cultures and the disappearance of native peoples, classical objects of anthropology. The fact that it was marked by the tracking of cultural formations in unusual spaces in the *world-system*, the key word of the *decolonial turn*, was decisive in the methodological option for multilocal ethnography. There are two modalities of multilocal ethnography, and here I will develop the one that deals with the study of archives, more precisely of documents. As documents are part of the modern state, it was imperative to trigger the notion of state and bureaucracy, as regulatory aspects are central (ABRAMS, 2014).

In this perspective, documents are considered social spaces defined by specific political interests in the conduct of the state institution, as they condense a multiplicity of social experiences, which makes them a privileged source of information (ZARIAS, 2004, p. 01). Here, the document analyzed is the Curriculum Document of the State of Pará. The *art of doing* consists in tracking the discourse, metaphor and plot (MARCUS, 2001) that produce a certain document, but there are other procedures related to the handling of documents highlighted by Zabala (2010), as well as by Muzzopappa and Villalta (2011), to be noted. The researcher's posture is guided by an ethics whose principle is “the personal is political”, which constitutes volatile identities and subjectivities, and allows to find the trivial strange (ZABALA, 2010).

In an attempt to reach the indicated objective, I organized the article starting from the organization of knowledge in the DCEPará, to then focus on the two features of the *modern/colonial episteme* present in the document: the disciplinary structure and cultural homogenization. I close by pointing out *epistemic disobedience* as a possibility to elaborate a

² Coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, coloniality of being and gender coloniality.

³ Article: A política de identidade do Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará. **Revista Estudos sobre las culturas contemporáneas**, Colima, Época III, v. XXVI, n. 52, pp. 9-36, jan./jun. 2021.

knowledge policy guided by the *politics of place*, by *interculturality* and by *transculturality*, which is already a reality in Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador.

It should also be noted that even though I am aware of the consolidation of curricular studies in Brazil, I decided to accept the provocation by Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (1999) about the imperative of decolonizing the curriculum. The curriculum specialist prepares the way for this task, however, he does it through the post-colonial theory; here, I bet on experimentation, activating the analytical tools of the *decolonial turn*, an engaging and powerful *episteme-in-formation*. Of all, only in trial and error it is possible to invent new tracks.

The organization of knowledge in the Curriculum Document of the State of Pará

After the approval of the Common National Curricular Base - BNCC in 2018, the implementation process began, for which all Federation Units were widely and intensely mobilized, so far twenty-one states and the Federal District have already reformulated the pre-school and elementary education⁴ curricula aligned with the Base. Thus, the State Department of Education - SEDUC/Pa, joined and supported the implementation of the BNCC, arguing that: “[...] *the MEC called upon the states to carry out the implementation of the aforementioned Base as it becomes the national and mandatory reference for the (re)formulation of curricula*” (PARÁ, 2018, p. 12, author highlights, our translation), based on learning objectives and skills proposed by the BNCC, considered mandatory reference. I will not dwell on the problems related to joining the BNCC, as these have been widely debated and relate to the logic of the national curriculum policy, marked by neoliberal ideas and instrumental pedagogy.

Thus, in Pará, several actions were carried out so that educational networks could count on curricula adapted to the BNCC. The process involved state agents (technical team) and teachers in a set of activities aimed at reformulating the local curriculum, as well as changes in assessment, in teaching materials and in the continuing education of teachers. The Curriculum Document of the State of Pará/DCEPará was prepared under the coordination of a technical team from the State Department of Education of the State of Pará - SEDUC/Pará⁵ and, even contested, was approved in December 2018, by the State Council of Education - CEE/Pará, being made available on the SEDUC/Pará portal. The curriculum document is presented in 462 pages and organized in five parts. On the cover, attention is drawn to the various images

⁴ Available: <http://www.consed.org.br/consed/implementacao-da-bncc-nos-estados>. Access: 15 Dec. 2020.

⁵ SEDUC/Pará Portal. Available: <http://www.seduc.pa.gov/site/seduc>. Access: 15 Dec. 2020.

alluding to the multiplicity of Pará culture, with the clear intention of establishing a link between territory, culture and education.

Before presenting the organization of knowledge for early childhood education and elementary education, the document under analysis situates the contemporary historical context, marked by intense social and cognitive changes, as well as their consequences in the various dimensions of life.

In contemporary society we live in a time of intense changes: the dynamics of work, the way people interact, everyday life and even thought are an appeal that asks subjects to expand their way of seeing and acting in the world and *breaking the standard gaze* on things (PARÁ, 2018, p. 13, author highlights our translation).

[...] the modern vision of knowledge that, derived from specialization, fragmented it into specialties, thus losing the vision of totality, separating those who know 'scientists' from those who do not know ordinary citizens (FERNANDES, 2007 *apud* PARÁ, 2018, p. 13, our translation).

The curriculum document recognizes that sociocultural changes resulted from civilizing advances, and that these also produced social, economic, cultural inequalities, as well as epistemic problems. In the latter case, the problems were caused by the fragmenting of knowledge, separating those who know from those who do not, valued scientific knowledge and made popular knowledge invisible, leading to the loss of the vision of totality (PARÁ, 2018). The curriculum document informs that such problems impose the need for changes. Thus, it suggests that social inequalities and the compartmentalization of knowledge can be remedied by two actions, one epistemic and the other pedagogical. The first is expressed in the indication of *breaking the gaze* in order to change the way of seeing knowledge; the second concerns the interdisciplinary pedagogical practice; both are considered necessary to overcome compartmentalization and value diversity.

The notion of curriculum triggered in the document on screen is that of social construction, therefore, the curriculum is emancipatory and the result of conflicting cultural selection due to social control. On the other hand, a certain interrelationship between curriculum, school experiences and identities is noticeable. In this sense, the curriculum translates into the

[...] school experiences that unfold around knowledge, amid social relationships, and that contribute to the construction of our students' identities. Curriculum, thus, is associated with the set of pedagogical efforts developed, with educational intentions, in school institutions (MOREIRA; CANDAU, 2007, p. 21 *apud* PARÁ, 2018, p. 16, our translation).

In the excerpt above, the relationship between experience, knowledge and identities is clear, and for this reason, the DCEPará insists on the argument that the school's educational intentions need to distance themselves from decontextualized and compartmentalized practices. To concretize the notion of curriculum as a social construction and its link with the everyday experiences that constitute identities, the document tries to distance itself from the *collection-type curriculum* – suggesting to follow the criticism of the curriculum formulated by Basil Bernstein – as this type of curriculum fragments and isolates knowledge. For the document under analysis, the ideal curriculum is collectively constructed for being able to express identities.

With the terrain prepared, the DCEPará presents the organization of knowledge based on structuring axes, considered thematic fields capable of mobilizing the knowledge chosen at school to be scientifically treated and confronted with the knowledge produced by men and women, as in the following passage:

The curricular document of the state of Pará presents as a conception of knowledge organization the structuring axes, as presented by the DCNEI (BRASIL, 2010a) and by the BNCC (BRASIL, 2017a), these are configured as broad and privileged thematic fields, capable to mobilize knowledge/content chosen at school and scientifically treated, in the confrontation with knowledge historically produced and re-elaborated [sic] by men and women (PARÁ, 2018, p. 63, our translation).

The structuring axes organize both early childhood education and elementary education. In early childhood education, interactions and games subsidize learning and development, and are considered capable of guaranteeing children's learning rights – rights to socialize, play, participate, explore, express and know. In elementary school, the structuring axes are: Space/Time and its Transformations, Language and its Communicative Forms, Values for Social Life, and, finally, Culture and Identity. There is provision for Learning Cycles with more flexible flows, and curriculum components of the pedagogical tradition, such as Portuguese Language, Physical Education, Art, English Language, History, Geography, Amazon Studies, Science, Mathematics and Religious Education.

By tracking the document guided by the *decolonial turn*, I proceeded by tracking the *modern/colonial episteme*, and identified two of its features, which I will now explore.

The DCEPará: disciplinary structure and cultural homogenization

Despite realizing that there are many features for reflection, I will focus on just two, the disciplinary structure and cultural homogenization. The first trait is expressed when the document criticizes the collection-type curriculum and the compartmentalization of knowledge,

proposing to organize knowledge into structuring axes and fields of experience; however, this intent does not materialize, as knowledge ends up being organized in the traditional disciplinary, arboreal and canonical structure.

In early childhood education, the difficulty of thinking about an alternative organization to the disciplinary structure is noticeable, so the document remains in the common place of this logic, by associating the fields of experience with fields of knowledge such as numeracy, oral and written language, ranking the knowledge. When reflecting on the logic of organizing knowledge for early childhood education, Tiriba and Flores (2016) reaffirm that the curriculum design needs to have interactions and games as its axis and highlight that the disciplinary structure focused on literacy and numeracy has the intent to facilitate the large-scale assessment provided for in the BNCC.

In Elementary School it is no different, in fact, the disciplinary, arboreal and canonical structure is confirmed by the foreseen curricular components. The compartmentalized disciplinary structure is clear in well-defined disciplinary boundaries, suggesting limits that should not be crossed, which can hinder dialogue and exchanges. The curricular organization is arboreal due to the existence of hierarchical subjects, as some curricular components are considered more relevant, such as Portuguese and Mathematics, which is evidenced by the higher quantity of objectives and expected skills, as opposed to the curricular components considered less relevant, such as Physical Education and Religious Education, for example.

In relation to the canon, this is maintained in the same way as provided for in the BNCC. The canon is expressed in the indication of themes and works considered classic and indispensable in the Western pedagogical tradition. Tiriba and Flores (2016) question the canon expressed in the exclusivity of Western paradigmatic references, to the detriment of the knowledge of traditional Brazilian communities. This is because the canon consists of a set of works recognized for their cultural and scientific value, therefore, works that do not meet this criterion are discarded because they are considered irrelevant, as is the case of works written by authors of minority groups (FRANCO, 2008). The selection of the canon is carried out by an intellectual with the authority to do so, an action that is not neutral and/or aseptic, but informed by the social, political and cultural context of each historical period, as well as by gender, race and social class. In the end, the canon is the expression of abstract universalism and Eurocentrism, to be followed by the nation that wants to be represented as civilized.

Regarding the disciplinary structure, Lopes (2008) highlights that in Western society the disciplinary curriculum is hegemonic, a fact that does not prevent other forms of knowledge organization. Although the author argues that in the last twenty years a certain curricular

flexibility is noticeable, with contextualized and interdisciplinary organization of knowledge, the knowledge policy in Brazil has been marked by ambivalence as it recovers instrumental curricular traditions (such as the BNCC), which allows the criticism of school subjects, considered retrograde and detached from students' lives.

In this scene, school subjects have been represented as decontextualized, fragmented and obstacles to the diversification of the education system. Based on arguments by Ivor Goodson, for whom the disciplines define the organization of the educational structure (guiding certain socio-educational requirements such as the production of diplomas, teacher education, teaching work) through the production of discourses that are supported and support disciplinary communities, Lopes (2008) concludes that school subjects are not “good” or “bad”, “right” or “wrong” *in themselves*, as they are educational institutions with which the meaning of curriculum policy is negotiated. Therefore, the intention of education systems to *break disciplinarity* may prove unattainable if actions are not able to guarantee dialogue with disciplinary communities. In a recently published article, Lopes (2019) clarifies, once again, that the subjects are not untouchable, but stresses that the reorientation of the curricular organization cannot be limited to changing the list of contents, competences and skills, but needs to consider the practices discursive and teaching identities. In the end, the author states that disciplinary organization is not necessarily an evil to be overcome.

As for the second trait, cultural homogenization, when tracking the curriculum document under analysis, I mapped discourses anchored in critical educational theories, metaphors that translate socio-educational and political intentions, such as *construction*, *breaking the gaze*, *founding pillar*, as well as the plot to which it is inseparable. About the political plot, this was well articulated during the elaboration process of the DCEPará, with meetings, gatherings and consultative preparatory seminars, whose participants were only the teachers of the network, that is, the disciplinary communities. The political plot was exclusive in that it prevented the effective participation of organized civil society and traditional communities. This is the reason for the homogenization promoted by the document, as it is not possible to face it with hierarchical, bureaucratic and excluding practices such as this methodology of merely consultative elaboration. However, faced with the exclusion, organized civil society resisted and rebelled, occupying the plenary session of the State Council of Education, preventing the approval of the document (it was approved in another session). The drafting process and the curriculum document were criticized by the Manifesto in Defense of Public Education (2018), and there are several reports in local newspapers and blogs that publicized the conflict. The fight against cultural homogenization is only possible by

guaranteeing the effective participation of excluded groups, to establish dialogue and listen to their cultural and epistemic demands.

Despite this excluding methodology of elaboration, the curricular document insists on the discourse on diversity, calling for cultural appreciation, respect and recognition of knowledge, as in passages like this:

Every curricular policy must have its *measurement* in culture, as it is the result of the selection and production of *knowings*, cultural manifestations, *conflicts and partnerships between people*, conceptions of knowledge and learning and ways of imagining and perceiving the world (PARÁ, 2018, p. 99, author's highlights, our translation).

Considering ancestral knowledge as *knowings* is a way to make them inferior, because, for Mignolo (2005; 2008), the *modern-colonial episteme* ranks knowledge and knowings, so that true and universal knowledge is always that produced by European scientific rationality; on the other hand, *knowings* are considered irrelevant because they are elaborated by colonized peoples, barbarians, therefore, without cognitive abilities to produce knowledge. The erasure of differences is achieved through the defense of human similarity, as *everyone* is considered *equal* in the world.

Wallerstein (2004) argues that cultural homogenization is a central strategy for erasing native cultures and differences, materialized through the imposition of unifying cultural policies – such as curricular reforms – on peripheral and semi-peripheral nations, such as Brazil; in the end, cultural homogenization guarantees social cohesion and ceaseless accumulation in the contemporary *world-system*. In the Brazilian case, Gabriel (2015), highlights that the ultimate purpose of a homogenizing curriculum is to unify the nation through a common national culture, and this intent was achieved through a political scheme between the native elite, businessmen, Brazilian political right and state agents, all committed to capital accumulation.

Still from the perspective of the state structure and its connection with the *modern/colonial world-system*, the neutral and objective state is an illusion, as its heavy bureaucratic machine with documents, rituals, norms and interests define a fearful and long-lasting power (WEBER, 1999). The state bureaucracy is heavily rational with a focus on order and hierarchy; as a result, the masses are prevented from participating in decisions, as they are considered irrational, thus promoting disorganization and diluting the hierarchy.

The bureaucratic mentality, the indolent and unproductive discourse of state agents led to the elaboration of the DCEPará, making effective changes in the organization of knowledge difficult. In the end, the knowledge policy of the state of Pará continues with a political identity

in tune with the *modern/colonial episteme* of the current world, marked by the post 11 September 2001 *imperial globality*, which privileges compartmentalized, monolingual and monocultural education.

Epistemic violence and its effects on knowledge and cultures

Lopes' (2008; 2019) arguments that disciplines do not constitute a problem to be overcome differ from the analysis of the *decolonial turn* because, in this perspective, disciplines are involved in the project of colonization of the Americas. So, in this part I intend to explore a little more about this relationship in terms of decoloniality, using some of its analytical tools. The *coloniality of knowledge* is one of the central tools, considered as a strategy that controls knowledge across the globe since the beginning of modernity, imposing a particular episteme as universal and standard to be followed. Many studies on the causes and consequences of modernity have already been produced, however, those of the *decolonial turn* weave together a particular and innovative analytics. Among the intellectuals that make up this *argumentation community* is Walter Mignolo, an Argentine semiologist who has dedicated himself to understanding the *modern/colonial episteme* and its political, epistemic and ethical effects in Latin America.

Para Mignolo (2008), a modernidade não é um marco temporal, um período histórico do qual não possamos escapar, mas sim, a narrativa de um período histórico elaborado por aqueles que se perceberam como os reais protagonistas, os europeus. Mignolo (2007) representa a modernidade como uma hidra de três cabeças, argumentando que apenas uma delas é visível: a retórica salvacionista. As outras duas cabeças são ocultadas, por serem o lado obscuro da modernidade: o domínio territorial e a racialização epistêmica, finalidades últimas da colonialidade.

The colonial domination of the Americas relied on the logic of colonialities (*coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, coloniality of being and the coloniality of gender*), which operate in various domains, such as: the economic, controlling territories and natural wealth; the political, controlling authority; the subjective, controlling bodies – ethnicity, gender and sexuality; and the epistemic, through the control of knowledge and cultures. In this cartography, colonialities constituted modernity, guaranteeing the continuity of capital accumulation and defining the rules of the scientific game, its bases and foundations (RIBEIRO, 2019).

The *coloniality of knowledge* was imposed on colonized nations through *epistemic violence*, a planned action with the purpose of constituting knowledge from the denial of any

knowledge other than European and of subjectifying colonized peoples from the center (MIGNOLO, 2007; 2008). In just over 500 years, this logic of domination has undergone superficial changes, so that *epistemic violence* continues to impose the *modern/colonial episteme*, anchored on three pillars: Christian theology of Iberian countries, Cartesian egology and illustrated political theory – liberalism and marxism. According to Mignolo (2005; 2007), this is because the colonial experience was ignored by Descartes and by Marx, not having articulated race and class in the reading of economic problems.

The *modern/colonial episteme* was woven into this web when Europe, without its own imaginary, naturalized colonialities, producing colonial difference, transforming certain differences into values. The knowledge produced by Christian theology, Cartesian egology and illustrated political theory concealed the geo-historical location and epistemic racialization, through a policy of knowledge based on the erasure of territories and the native cosmovision as a way to guarantee the universality of knowledge (MIGNOLO, 2008). Even camouflaged by abstract universalism, the *coloniality of knowledge* needs the salvationist rhetoric to justify it, since inequalities constitute uncomfortable problems resulting from the colonial adventure, which are difficult to solve. Salvationist rhetoric distracts attention from *epistemic violence* by disseminating speeches and praising modernity for its supposed benefits, such as progress, democracy, freedom and happiness for all, considered equal across the globe.

By defending abstract universalism, the *coloniality of knowledge* disseminates Eurocentrism, which does not concern a geographic location, but the hegemony of a way of thinking, the gold standard that colonized nations must follow to be considered civilized. Abstract universalism was settled in the West by Theology, Philosophy and Social Sciences – this one during the nineteenth century – fields of knowledge that were not at all aseptic, which lent concepts and categories of thought to be used as weapons to impose representations of the Americas as barbarians, mutilate thought and silence native voices; in a word, to racialize. In so doing, the *coloniality of knowledge* promoted the exoticization and fetishization of *difference*, imposing colonial values on native peoples, numbing the colonial wound, nullifying pain with a variety of analgesics.

I emphasized that the logic of racialization has two dimensions, the epistemic and the ontological, with the purpose of classifying colonized peoples as inferior, due to their supposed cognitive difficulty in producing knowledge. Such cognitive difficulty would be attested by the fact that these peoples do not master writing, are not Christians and do not speak one of the six modern imperial languages (Portuguese, English, French, Italian, German, Spanish); therefore, native languages are considered strange and/or unsuitable for rational thought (theological or

secular). With this certainty, epistemic racialization hierarchized knowings and knowledge, stating that the peoples of the Americas produced and produce *wisdom*, and Europe produced and produce universally valid knowledge (MIGNOLO, 2007). In turn, ontological racialization reduced different ethnic groups in the Americas to *indians and blacks*, spreading discourses that they are not part of history and humanity, or rather, humanity itself: white, civilized and Christian.

The complicity between the *coloniality of knowledge* and the policy of the state of knowledge was disguised by the “disciplinary identity”, expressed by the fact that in Latin America we still think, analyze, feel, describe and write from an excessive obedience to concepts, categories, European axioms and methods, with their monotopic and hermetically closed cosmovision (MIGNOLO, 2003; 2005; 2008).

Because of this, the debate on the *modern/colonial episteme* is central to the understanding of the modern State and its organizational structure, as it was founded and legitimized “[...] under the illusion that it was a neutral, objective and 'democratic' apart from identity in politics” (MIGNOLO, 2008, p. 297, our translation). Far from being aseptic, the state is articulated by a heavy bureaucracy that guarantees discipline and subjective control of its state agents and the population. Thus, in contemporary times, the neoliberal and globalized state privileges the continuation of the European epistemic model, which is guaranteed through the bureaucratic mentality of its agents, responsible for defining official knowledge, in general, expressed in a policy of decontextualized knowledge.

With these arguments, Mignolo (2005; 2008) contests epistemic subjection, highlighting that the Greeks invented philosophical thought, but not thought. Thus, the Argentine semiologist is in favor of *detachment* from the *modern/colonial episteme*, indicating an epistemic route located in the reservoir of disqualified native cosmologies in these more than 500 years. If we remain stuck in the hegemonic episteme, we will not see another way of *thinking-making-living* in Latin America. *Epistemic disobedience* is, therefore, a political, scientific and ethical responsibility in intellectual doing in our region, which has registered a growing energy of resistance and detachment from the *modern/colonial episteme*, taking shape in decolonial thoughts and actions.

Weaving the epistemic debate in the educational field, Castro-Gómez (2007), a Colombian philosopher, argues that the knowledge produced and taught at the university is a legacy of colonial paradigms that, by making modern science resemble God, transformed it into universal and absolute truth. This epistemic model has focused on university curricula, so that knowledge has been organized in a disciplinary, arboreal and canonical structure. Arboreal

because of the idea that there is a hierarchy between specialized knowledge, differentiated by epistemic boundaries that must not be crossed. This is because the ultimate end of knowledge is not the apprehension of the unknown, but the decomposition of reality into fragments to dominate it more and better. Therefore, the disciplines materialize the idea that reality needs to be fragmented, so that the parts can be intensely analyzed in the permanent search for certainty, for the true knowledge that is located in the incorporeal realm, in the *cogito*.

Still for the Colombian philosopher, Descartes emphasizes that everything that comes from bodily experience - odors, flavors, colors - constitutes an epistemological obstacle, therefore, they must be expelled from the scientific space; this is a solution that condemns this knowledge to inhabit the *doxa* (CASTRO-GÓMEZ, 2007). Viewed from this point of view, ancestral knowledge and native cultural traditions are seen as *doxa*, as an epistemological obstacle to be overcome, as they are considered exotic, anecdotal, superficial, folkloric, mythological, in a word, prescientific. This binarism erects insurmountable cultural borders that consolidate homogenization. Another device that fixes knowledge in certain places to facilitate its identification and handling is the canon, materialized through skillful strategies present in all disciplines. Among the strategies that define what deserves to be considered valid knowledge are: going back to the origins of a certain discipline, highlighting its founding fathers, the authors that need to be read (the classics), or even indicating the fundamental themes that belong only to certain disciplines. As you can see, the *modern/colonial episteme* does not only affect the organization of the curriculum, it affects cultures and subjects.

Palermo (2014) also contributes to the debate on the relationship between knowledge, cultures and education, however, highlighting another element of the *modern/colonial episteme*, the *single thought*. The imposition of a *single thought* exerted by epistemic coloniality permeates all areas of everyday life, materialized in the field of education at all levels, from early childhood education to postgraduate school, in a system that feeds back, sedimenting distinctions through different strategies, as the disregard of native knowledge and the production of caged subjectivities. In this panorama, the mismatch between discourses and pedagogical actions has been recurrent, as the most common is the indolence and unproductiveness of the discourse of educational institutions, as they operate to prevent effective changes in the conception of knowledge and in educational practices.

Exploring the *curriculum* policy, Palermo (2014) informs that since its emergence in Europe in the 19th century, its purpose was to form the citizen for the nascent republican nations, through plans and programs that nullified the knowledge of the preexisting nations. Nowadays, the unique thinking in education is manifested in the imposition of the free market

and in the standardizing actions that silence traditional communities and make the other invisible, due to the shame of its supposedly rude culture, its "terrible" language, which generates hegemonic deafness relative to their voices and cultural demands. Faced with such actions and intentions, it is necessary to relativize the official, universal and homogeneous curriculum, in order to react from the perspective of the decoloniality of knowledge, a possible path towards the necessary affection and empathy with the sociocultural memory of belonging and with ancestral knowledge. For Palermo (2014), it is not about not theorizing, but about doing it from another place, discarding some tools of the *modern/colonial episteme*, daring to map other experiences and discourses for the reinterpretation of local cultures, as Western pedagogy is unable to account for the differences due to its homogenizing purposes.

In this sense, the State needs to act in the construction of a plural society in all dimensions, like other countries in Latin America. It is an ethical and political position in the face of globalized dehumanization and the imposition of a *single thought* in the economy, in episteme and in education. Another pedagogical action, which changes the Eurocentric pedagogical subjectivity, the inferior representations of local culture and knowledge is demanded, since the school has been limited to disseminating discourses on disciplinary flexibility and diversity, but by not promoting broad dialogue, by not listening to traditional communities, produces and reproduces exclusionary ideas and actions.

Epistemic disobedience to a different curriculum policy

Ideas cannot be killed: they survive in bodies, as they are part of life.
Walter D. Mignolo (2014, our translation).

The curriculum policy of the state of Pará imposes on children, young people and teachers a knowledge organized in the classical disciplinary structure, arboreal and canonical, aiming at the homogenization of culture and the guarantee of incessant accumulation in the contemporary *modern/colonial world-system*. To defuse the debate on another way of organizing knowledge, I once again appropriate the contributions of Mignolo (2005), Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2005b; 2007) and Palermo (2014), with the sole intention of launching clues to move thinking in the direction of *epistemic disobedience*.

Mignolo (2005) points out the need *to learn to unlearn and relearn*. But *learning to unlearn and relearn what?* Learning to unlearn the Eurocentric knowledge that, recontextualized in school content, produces and reproduces stereotyped and inferior representations about native cultures and knowledge, to relearn how to be and how to live in

dialogue with difference. The knowledge guided by the ethical, political and cultural principles of the *decolonial turn* needs to be produced from the dismantling of the four colonialities, in order to allow primary school children and youth to identify the colonial wound, recognize racialization, inferior representations and Eurocentrism to question them, enhancing abilities to think from the *politics of place* and *interculturality*, tools capable of helping in the challenge of thinking about a fair selection of knowledge for Latin America and the Amazon.

The *politics of place* is a process of recognizing the colonial violence of the past and present, in order to *realize* the geo-historical locality and the fracture of living in the global South; it is capable of inciting *thinking-making-feeling* from the recognition of history, memories and ancestral knowledge, to build decolonial identities and subjectivities. Latin America is a place of living cultures, produced by women and men who react and fight in search of alternatives for colonial policies and for the *good life* in the region (MIGNOLO, 2005). *Interculturality*, on the other hand, was born in the Andes and is a notion introduced by indigenous intellectuals to claim epistemic rights in the context of colonial projects⁶. Interculture means inter-epistemology, an intense dialogue between non-Western cosmology (Afros, Indians, mestizos, Asians, Arab-Islamics, among others) and Western cosmology. *Intercultural* dialogue is an ethical-political strategy that places both universal and local reason on stage, promoting the *mestizo episteme*, constituting *other* subjects, capable of reading and translating the colonial encounter and its effects.

As for the rigid and compartmentalized disciplinary structure of knowledge in educational institutions, Castro-Gómez (2005a; 2007) showed the genealogy of this *modus operandi* that reverberates in education. Considering that we live in a complex world, interdisciplinary practice exhaustively proposed as a way to overcome compartmentalization does not achieve its purpose, as it is limited to exchanging information between different disciplines, leaving its foundations intact. The action capable of breaking down the compartmentalization and promoting the dialogue between knowledge and between cultures is transdisciplinary, an emerging episteme that becomes a bridge for the transcultural dialogue between knowledge, helping the cognitive exchange between Western science and native knowledge. In this sense, transdisciplinarity is capable of intervening in the disciplinary, arboreal and canonical structure, allowing experimentation with rhizomatic structures, manifested in disciplinary networks and/or transcultural essays.

⁶ *Interculturalism* differs from multiculturalism, considered by Mignolo (2005) as a product of the American State/US, which aims to grant “culture” while maintaining the European episteme.

In Brazil, the curriculum has historically been narrated by the colonizer and subordinated to the European canon, transmitting supposedly objective knowledge, which has cruel effects on the identities and subjectivities of children and young people (COSTA, 1998). However, there are some educational proposals in motion, such as bilingual education for the indigenous school, quilombola education, education in the spaces of social movements, such as the proposal by the Landless Workers Movement. In this open terrain, it is necessary to continue tensioning to stretch the curricular space, challenging the disciplinary structure, the canon and the monoculturalism of national and local curriculum policies, proposing another way to organize knowledge.

I conclude by arguing that the curriculum as an arena for the production of meanings, a terrain for struggles between theories and worldviews, allows for negotiations between the interests of the State and civil society, if the balance between scientific knowledge and ancestral knowledge is in mind. A curriculum policy that refuses the objectification of place, the other and ancestral knowledge, which goes beyond the rhetoric of valuing diversity, interdisciplinary practices and participation, needs to promote intercultural and transdisciplinary knowledge networks.

Provisory considerations

Multilocal ethnography was the *art of doing* that allowed following the discourse, metaphors and plot of the Curriculum Document of the State of Pará, identifying conflicts and resistances. It was possible to follow two striking features of the DCEPará that made this curricular proposal inconsistent, as it maintains the classic disciplinary, arboreal, canonical and homogenizing structure, despite its criticism of the compartmentalization of knowledge and discourses on diversity and participation, however, as I said, organized civil society and traditional communities were excluded from the process of drafting the curriculum document. In the end, this curricular policy reflects the political aspirations of hegemonic groups inside and outside the country that aim to maintain the disciplinary identity with the *modern/colonial episteme* and erase minority cultures from the world-system map.

In terms of the *decolonial turn*, the DCEPará expresses a State policy of knowledge that is obedient to the *modern/colonial episteme*, because state agents have committed themselves to the demands of the *world-system*. Despite the brief contextualization, the notion of curriculum as a social construction is consistent with some criticism of the compartmentalization of knowledge, the indication to *break the gaze* when visualizing modern

knowledge, to seek to make popular knowledge visible, the disciplinary, arboreal and canonical structure and the cultural homogenization make it inconsistent.

Another organization of knowledge is possible; however, it is imperative to practice *epistemic disobedience*, a reaction capable of dismantling the excluding compartmentalization, canon and homogenization. It is not about producing knowledge from a simple *detachment* from the colonial episteme, but about *interlinking* different rationalities to restore colonized histories, memories and subjectivities, through transdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue. From the clues presented here by the *decolonial turn*, I visualize the possibility of a decolonial curriculum capable of inciting intercultural dialogue between Western knowledge and ancestral knowledge, to recontextualize them in school knowledge for *another* thinking-making-living in Latin America and in Amazon.

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